

I am opposed to the proposed draft local plan submission version.

I wrote a lengthy objection to the draft PDO of the Warrington Borough Council local plan a few years ago, as did many other people. I hoped that WBC might have taken some notice of the volume of residents of South Warrington who raised concerns about development of this area.

It feels as though the contents of the local plan was a done deal, even before any draft PDO was aired to the public, and that all the consultations etc were just a box ticking exercise, not a real involvement of the Warrington community. It seems as though the local plan, as many fear, is a developer led profit making plan.

I will outline some of my main concerns:

1. Langtree executives + WBC councillors = Wire regeneration. Langtree are paid by WBC as "consultants". Can WBC planning department look at the proposed South East Employment area (aka six56) development without prejudice or favouritism?
2. Green belt release. Setting a dangerous precedent on "economic grounds". Also questions could be raised about the integrity and validity of WBCs green belt assessment, and the findings could be challenged.
3. Highways England were concerned about the lack of planning, modelling and assessment WBC had undertaken prior to the draft PDO local plan.
4. Job types created in the South East Employment Area. Mostly warehousing jobs probably paying a maximum of £26-£27k pa. Roughly this would allow one to borrow £100k for a mortgage. Looking at properties on RightMove for up to £110k with 3 bedrooms (average 2adult, 2 children family) within 3 miles of this development, there are under ten listed. The new developments in the area will not include many/any homes of this price as the land value is so high that it precludes it. Therefore, these workers will need to travel in via road. This will add to pollution and congestion. Warrington already ranks uncomfortably highly in the air pollution tables for the UK.
5. Lorry congestion and pollution. Vehicle fuel emissions and small particulate debris pollution have been shown to increase the incidence of dementia and respiratory disease. I am sure you are aware of the "Oslo effect". Will Langtree and WBC land this on us and our children?
6. Questionable longevity of jobs created. With the increased automation and robotisation of these companies and service providers, will these jobs decline over time?
7. Abundance of similar developments in the area, plans for St Helens and large logistics hub at Manchester airport, plus the proposed Cheshire Gateway park near Bowden roundabout. Are they all needed? Those already planned and being built are likely to provide Greater Manchester's logistics needs according to a report commissioned by Cheshire East Council. Is there any joined up thinking, or is it a developer-profit led free for all?
8. Empty brownfield sites and empty units currently in Warrington and all along the local motorway network from Liverpool to Manchester and Preston to Stoke. Also, now Fiddler's Ferry, and multiple sites suitable as employment space due to companies changing their working practices, or closing, due to the pandemic.
9. Laughable additions to the South East Employment Area site specification ... cycle and pedestrian routes to the site... how many homes are within walking distance of this development? Not many. I'm not sure any of their residents will be looking forward to a new warehousing or manufacturing job to replace their current employment. Maybe the people who currently actually live within properties that are within the area marked for development will want to work there... I think not.
10. "Proposed" improvements to roads. Nothing solid there.
11. Current use of the junctions and roads. Additional traffic on these roads will cause mayhem, as will the works themselves.

12. People have homes within this proposed development area. Their lives are about to be turned upside down by the proposed 20 years plus of building work planned. Overruns are more than likely. Building heights already proposed at the South East Employment Area are outrageous, and developers concede they will have a visual impact on many local residents.
13. Environmental impact of removing green space and replacing it with concrete. Changes to wildlife habitats, potential negative effects on wildlife in the area and decline in their populations. Effects on atmospheric CO₂/O₂ levels, and on water absorption into the ground. Inevitable litter and human debris as you can see around Appleton Thorn industrial area around the South East Employment Area. Litter pickers around the current industrial park in this area report high levels of litter, including human waste.
14. Laughable “net gain in biodiversity”. Current environmental science shows the devastation to micro ecosystems within the soil and mature trees, as well as other sites, by human development. You cannot remove soil and replace with lower level soil, or soil from another site without destroying the populations of depth specific microbes and other organisms. This leads to semi-sterile soil that takes hundreds of years, if ever to return to its original level of biodiversity. The same is true of mature trees and ponds. All have their own inhabitants, who have adapted and developed over many decades. Removing mature trees and replacing with young trees from a different environs or removing a pond and making a man made replica takes away the biodiversity of the area and doesn’t replace it like for like. The imported creatures (if any) may not be appropriate and thrive in the area. The arrogance of developers that they can not only replace the inhabitants of ecosystems, but also improve upon them, when they cannot even hope to replace them like for like is hyperbole and unscientific.

I have many objections about the development south of the Manchester Ship Canal in the South East Urban Extension and the South East Employment Area. My main concern is one that should be obvious to planners at Warrington Borough Council as it is a planning constraint that was recognised over 40 years ago.

In the 1970’s a strategic decision (part of the New Town planning) was made to limit development in Bridgwater (South East Urban Extension footprint) until the infrastructure connecting this area and the town north of the Manchester Ship Canal was in place to sustain it. The intention was to replace the high level bridge at Akers Road with a new high capacity road bridge, thus opening up Bridgwater for development, but the bridge was never built. How do I know this? One of the planning officers for the New Town is an acquaintance of mine. Nothing has changed since then, in fact more houses have been built in the “Bridgwater Area” without any changes to roads or transport systems. This issue must be thoroughly and unambiguously addressed, including full funding sources in any Local Plan if the developments proposed south of the Manchester Ship Canal are to be viable.

I am hoping that all who oppose this development have our voices heard.

Yours sincerely

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